PEACE OF PENNSYLVANIA GUARDED BY 228 MEN

Gov. Pennypacker Is Responsible for the Formation of the State Police, Who Have Proved Their Worth Many Times.

By JAMES B. MORROW.

Philadelphia, April 18.—With the fingers of his hands locked across his body just above the waist line, his feet on his desk and boots on his feet, Samuel W. Pennypacker was brooding over one phase of his perplexities as governor of Pennsylvania.

When he arose, walked to a window in his office and looked out upon pigeons and squirrels foraging in the State House grounds, an idea, new in this country, had taken shape in his mind. Soon a law of the legislature put the idea into workable form.

A young horseman, shaved, tanned and trained down to the bone, uniformed in gray and armed with a 38-caliber revolver, a 45-caliber carbine and a hickory club twenty-two inches long is a flesh and blood manifestation of Gov. Pennypacker's conception and the statute of the Harrisburg lawmakers.

Seen in a country road or a village street, he looks like a vigilant and hard-riding military man. He is all of that and much more besides. Nine times in ten he was once in the cavalry of Uncle Sam. A millionaire and a miner are the same to him, within the law or outside of it. He is ready for any service ranging in adventure from the chasing of a poultry thief to the capture of a murderer. He will shoot a mad dog or search for a child lost in the forest. He will go for a doctor or he will trap a Black Hand letter writer and extortioner.

Officially he is known as a State policeman. He has been killed and wounded by pistols and guns, his skull has been fractured by brickbats and stones, but he rides on, in and out of small rural towns, through rocky and crooked mountain roads and in valleys, past school houses and farm houses and fields filled with cattle or growing grain. Dying, another stern and silent rider gets his weapons and his horse.

A Soldier and a Dandy.

Having the law as he wanted it—and it is one of the briefest ever written in a statute book—Gov. Pennypacker began a search for the man. (Emphasize the definite article.) He found him, as he thought, in Maj. John C. Groome, a merchant, a veteran of the Spanish war, and for sixteen years captain of the Philadelphia City Troop.

Now, Maj. Groome is a dual personality, in that he is a soldier, if there ever was one, and a dandy besides. There have been plenty of such men in France and in England, both in fiction and in fact. I observe as he talks to me in his office, the walls of which are hung with old prints, that his finger nails are manicured, that the ends of his short mustache are waxed and that he wears a silk shirt and a quaint ring with diamonds in it.

In Porto Rico, where he took his troop of lawyers, brokers, bankers and manufacturers, and where he remained for several months, he kept his command in their flannel shirts and under their shelter tents at night. It is told of him that he walked the streets of his camp at 10 o'clock kicking the ribs of the sleepers, who, to escape the heat, were lying in the open contrary to orders. There was fever in other companies and troops but not in his. And so all his men came back to Philadelphia.

Pennypacker thought of Groome and wrote him a letter. The response was gracious but, of course, the major was too busy to become a policeman. Later he was called to Harrisburg by telephone. "There are plenty of men competent to organize the new department," he told Gov. Pennypacker.

"I offered the place to ten after offering it to you, and all declined it," the governor replied, not knowing how his answer sounded. "I am sworn to execute the laws. I have no one to call on, in the event of a serious emergency, but my private secretary and my stenographer, who happens to be a young woman."

"Your argument," Maj. Groome replied, "is unanswerable. The job is mine."

Fought the Politicians First.

The statute put everything into the hands of the superintendent. He was empowered to hire 228 officers and men, divide them into four companies or platoons, and to see that they knew how to ride horseback. Everything else practically was left to the superintendent. Maj. Groome went to Ireland, which is smaller in area than Pennsylvania, and studied the constabulary of that country. It contained, he found, 10,000 men. The law gave him only 200 privates, twenty sergeants, four lieutenants, and four captains.

Returned to his home, Maj. Groome fought and won his first battle. It was with politicians. One party leader sent him a list of twenty names. Men bearing the names were to be privates. Not a man on the list, however, was appointed. "Dou you know," he was asked by a famous Republican, after his whole force had been enlisted and had gone into training, "that seven of your eight officers are Democrats?"

"Even so," Maj. Groome answered, and he is a Pennsylvania Republican himself, "your inquiry is not interesting or pertinent. I don't give a hoot whether the State police force is Protestant or Catholic, Republican or Democratic. I want men who can ride and fight and when I cease to be boss of the force then the governor will have to find another superintendent." Thus at the outset politics were kept out of the department. Promotions, in all the years following the organization of the force, have been made from the ranks.

"Politics so far have never influenced a single appointment," Maj. Groome told me. "Neither money interest, personal interest or political interest can put a man into the State police. And once in, on his merits, a man cannot be put out unless he is found to be unfit or is guilty of misbehavior. Having been dismissed, and mark what I am saying, a man can never be reinstated.

"I was before a committee of the New York legislature not a great while ago," Maj. Groome went on to say. "The question of a State police force was being debated in Albany. I explained the situation in Pennsylvania. 'You believe, then,' some one said, 'in centering all power in one man?'

High-browa Not Liked by Groome.

"'Absolutely,' I replied. 'First, find the man—and if he is not dependent on his job for a living, so much the better—and hold him personally responsible for results. Give him a free hand and let him alone. Empower him to appoint the members of his force. Moreover, instruct him to cut out the utterly ridiculous questions of the usual civil service examination.

"'So far as I am concerned,' I continued, 'I would prefer a man who does not know the population of Rome, the height of the Himalaya Mountains or whether the Duke of Wellington was a man, a trotting horse or a brand of smoking tobacco. I'll teach him all that is required of a State policeman. But he must be fearless, have a good character, and a whole lot of common sense. If he can read and write and do simple sums in every-day arithmetic he is fit, educationally, to maintain order and hinder crime.'

"There are some stations in life. I might have told the committee, where the occupants thereof can be overtrained intellectually. High-brows have their uses, I suppose, but they didn't win the battle of Bunker Hill nor bottle up the fleet at Santiago. We insist, right at the start, that a candidate for a place on the Pennsylvania police shall be of excellent moral character. He patrols alone and is subjected to many temptations. Country justices of the peace may offer to split the fees with him if he takes his prisoners before them for a hearing. Brewers may tender him large bribes for overlooking certain liquor dealers who are selling without a license.

"Formerly we had what is commonly known as the iron and coal police. An employer of labor, in the case of a strike, could ask the governor to commission ten, forty or a hundred men for the protection of his property. The employer, once the commissioners were issued, would hire and pay the men. Gov. Pennypacker found thousands of such commissions out and uncanceled. The men so employed were, in reality, private guards and not public officers. Many of them were of bad reputation. As the jobs ran with the strikes, it was in their interest to keep the strikes going as long as possible. This could be done by violent and unlawful acts of their own.

The Coal and Iron Police.

"Gov. Pennypacker wanted to get clear of the coal and iron police. Back of them, of course, was the State militia for ugly situations requiring a considerable body of men. But getting out the militia is a cumbersome and expensive proceeding. It has not been out, by the way, since we came in. The National Guard was called on in 1902 for riot service at Hazelton. Nine thousand men were on duty for eight weeks at a cost to the people of Pennsylvania of $365,000. So in his cogitations Gov. Pennypacker, with no help handy, as he said, but his secretary and stenographer, hit upon what the law now calls the department of State police.

"I had known about the old coal and iron guards. They, as I said, were partisans. The State police, if called into a zone of industrial troubles, does not concern itself about the cause of the troubles. It has nothing to do with the matters in dispute between the strikers and their employers. Nor has it any prejudices. The men ride into the scene, looking straight ahead, turning neither to the right nor to the left to nod to an acquaintance or a friend.

"On the front edges of a mob of rioters there may be comrades or relatives of the members of the National Guard sent to iron out a mob. That is one objection to the National Guard. Again, militiamen are not trained in the handling of disorderly crowds. Our men are—that is one of their specialties, though for two years past, fortunately, such service of us has not been required.

"We ride into a town, as I have said. We know nobody while on duty. The manufacturer or the mine owner is no more to us than are the striking workmen assembled in the streets. Now it is a difficult matter to break up a mob of 5,000 angry men. The city police use their clubs. Militiamen press forward with leveled bayonets. Often blood flows. We prevent the mob from gathering in the first place. Three men stop. Soon there are a dozen, then a hundred and then a thousand. We keep each human unit in motion. The currents flow and there is no stagnation.

MAJ. JOHN C. GROOME.
Chief of the Pennsylvania State Police.

"They Didn't Eat Us Up."

"Six thousand conductors and motormen of the Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company struck in February, 1910. The 2,900 city policemen could not deal with the situation. A call on Gov. Stuart was made for the National Guard. 'I will send the State police, the governor said. 'After they are eaten up, I'll give you the National Guard.

"But we were not eaten up. We rode to Kensington, in the center of the factory district, and took command of a territory composed of sixteen city blocks. I had eight officers and 178 privates. We reached the scene early in the morning. Violence had stopped by noon. Although we made a number of arrests, street cars were run in the district regularly and safely in the afternoon. After three days I sent two of my troops away on other duty. The remaining two troops left the city in six days and returned to their barracks. Order had been restored in the Kensington district.

"No mystery brought about the result. The State police are trained in special lines of service. We read with some astonishment of two members of the Canadian mounted police rounding up a whole tribe of Indians and marching them off to Winnipeg, Prince Albert, or Fort Graham. It was not so once. A half a dozen police would attempt to arrest a bunch of Indians and would be shot up. More police would then come and shoot up the Indians. Thus the Indians learned in time to respect the police and to move along when told to do so.

"Coming to the main point, let me say that the control of a bad situation depends on the men who are assigned to the job. I was appointed superintendent in July, 1905. By the middle of August I had received 7,000 applications for places on the force. Only 250 men passed the physical examination. Of the 250, only 200 qualified mentally. The sifting, you see, was very thorough. From the 200 I chose eight officers and 185 privates, 90 per cent of whom had seen service in the regular army. They came from nineteen States, east and west of the Mississippi River.

Where He Stationed the Troops.

"The force was cut up into four troops, fifty privates to a troop, commanded by a captain, a lieutenant, and five sergeants. I studied the criminal records of the State and stationed the troops at Greenburg, Punxsutawney, Wyoming and Reading. Afterwards I transferred two of the troops from Punxsutawney and Reading to Pottsville and Butler. Two troops are now in the eastern part of the State and two are in the western part. They live in barracks. The men board themselves at a cost of $20 a month, but the State supplies them with horses, arms, and uniforms.

"Substations are established when the appropriations are large enough. We had sixty last summer. The stations may be farm houses or village hotels. Three men are sent to each, two of whom do patrol duty. The third man remains at the station and is in telephone connection with the barracks and the patrols. Every man has a little book. When he passes through a village the postmaster enters the fact in the book, stating the hour, and so we know that our men are on the move and are not sitting under trees smoking cigars.

"Rural crime is one of the neglected problems of government. It is left for most part to country constables who are often lazy and inefficient, and even crooked. Farmers are getting good roads and they already have telephones and a daily delivery of mail. By and by they will demand protection for their families and their property. I can easily see the time when there will be a rural police system in every State. Substations, such as we have established in Pennsylvania, will be located twenty miles apart. Four men from each station will patrol the country for ten miles north, east, south, and west.

"The Pennsylvania State police began operations, as an organized force, in January, 1906. We rode 65,000 miles the first year and made 808 arrests. Our men are not only taught how to shoot, but they must know a good deal about criminal law. They can arrest on sight or on warrants issued by local authorities. Working up cases is one of their duties—getting evidence, the names of witnesses, and so on. A very large percentage of our arrests, therefore, are followed by convictions. Last year 90 out of every 100 persons taken into custody were declared to be guilty.

Crime in Rural Districts.

"Crime in the country has about as wide a range as it has in large towns and cities. We make arrests for murder, intoxication, burglary, larceny, illegal liquor selling, arson, counterfeiting, highway robbery, gambling, and horse stealing. Also, we are charged with inforcing the game, fish, and forest laws. There are more crimes against women and young girls in rural districts than is generally supposed. We are thought to be engaged principally in suppressing riots. It is while performing such service that we get sensational notices in the newspapers. As a matter of fact, riots constitute a very small part of our business.

"Our men catch runaway boys and girls, find lost berry pickers in the mountains, put out fires, break up camps of vagrants, shoot mad dogs, help in times of flood, arrest Italians and other aliens for dynamiting streams and hunting with ferrets, trap Black Handers, maintain quarantines during epidemics, and do a hundred other things to make life in the country safe and to protect property. Mobs are only incidents in our work, but when they gather, let me tell you, Charley Schwab, president of the Bethlehem Steel Company, is no more to us than is one of his coal heavers.

"Seven of our men were killed and seventeen were dangerously injured, seven of whom were made cripples for life, during the first four years of our service. Law-breakers need to fear the police, and other persons ought to respect them. Our vigorous conduct back in 1906, 1907, 1908, and 1909 cost us a heavy toll, but it was a notice to the people of Pennsylvania that the State police were not afraid of anything, that they played no favorites, and that when they started after a man they captured him.

"The New Florence tragedy occurred in the autumn of the first year we were on duty. Sergeant Logan attempted to arrest two Italians charged with murder, and was shot at five times. The Italians took refuge in a house. Five troopers were sent to Logan's assistance. As they approached the house, the Italians opened fire from second-story windows. Private Henry was killed instantly, a load of buckshot hitting him in the abdomen. Private Mullen was badly wounded in the leg. He was carried to a place of safety.

One Man Shot Eight Times.

"Lomer Chambers, another private going back for Henry's body, was shot three times in the lungs, once in the eye, once in the stomach and three times in the head. He lost the sight of the eye but he recovered and as Sergt. Chambers is still doing business. Meanwhile, eighteen more troopers had arrived on the scene. They rushed the house and Private Zehringer, leading the charge, was killed. The house was then surrounded and was blown up with dynamite next morning. Three dead Italians were found in the ruins.

"That, quoting an old phrase, was our baptism of blood. Three years afterward we had a lieutenant, four sergeants and thirty-six privates at Schoenville, where the foreign employes of the steel car works were on a strike. One Sunday five private, Williams, Smith, O'Donnell, Kitch, and Jones, were returning to the plant on a trolley car from leaves of absence. They wore civilian's clothes and were armed only with revolvers.

"A mob of 3,000 men attacked them. Williams was killed and Kitch was shot through the hand. The other three privates soon ran out of ammunition. When relief arrived the naked body of Williams was found on the floor of the car. O'Donnell had a fractured skull. Smith, who died the next day, had been shot in both legs and terribly beaten; Kitch was shot through the right hand, and Jones was naked and unconscious. Six of the foreigners lay dead in the street. Thirty-two others were arrested. We paid for it but we established a reputation for game fighting, no matter how big the odds were against us.

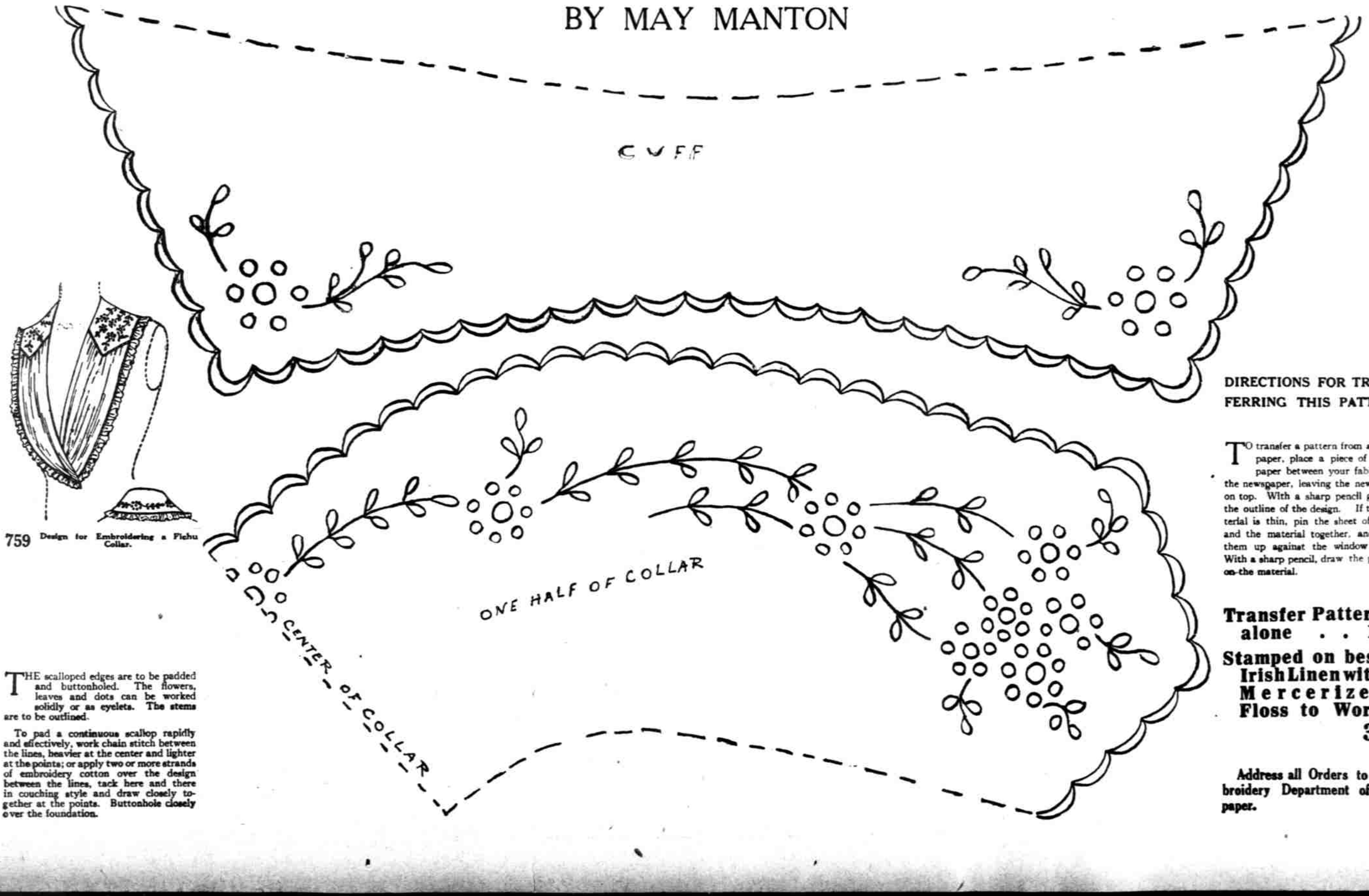
"In the meanwhile we had developed a number of capable detectives, plain clothes men, we call them, and they had tracked down several murderers and broken up a Black Hand holdout near Wilkesbarre, making twenty-five arrests and confiscating seventeen shotguns and rifles, twelve revolvers and nine stilettos.

"We are still on the job," Maj. Groome said at the end of the interview, "and now that we are known, there is a great deal less shooting and stone-throwing than formerly."

Maj. John C. Groome, Placed at Head of Force, Has Built Organization Into Wonderful Power Against Crime.

EMBROIDERED COLLAR AND CUFF

BY MAY MANTON



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